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SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAY MOVEMENT IN OUR HIGH SCHOOLS

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ONE OF THE GREATEST lessons of the world war was the fact, so clearly shown, of the physical unfitness of a large number of our men of fighting age. To correct this condition in the citizens of tomorrow great interest in physical education has been aroused. The advancement of physical education as a part of the school program is one of the outstanding features of our recent educational development. The proper stress of the physical is being given through the directed development of the play movement.

"There is no agency known to man, making so much for physical and mental development, for quickness of body and mind, for poise, self confidence, ability to correct mental and bodily action and above all for that vague thing called personality, as *play*."

Besides the mental and physical values we find that some of the very finest and highest lessons in real moral character growth may be found in play. In fact, the ethical factor in games is one of the play movement's greatest assets. Play also helps the individual to find a place in the group. It develops leadership and affords universal expression not found in other activities.

Then too, there are preventive values of play. To forestall sickness in mind, in morals, in body and in social graces play becomes the great preventive force necessary to the leader and the teacher of boys and girls everywhere. Instead of spending millions of dollars to take care of the delinquent, dependent, and defectives, why not spend something of money and eager interest in the work of the playground and the play community?

Every community, no matter how large or small, may have play areas and to a certain degree organized play. And they may have it functioning properly. The future citizenry demands it. The welfare of the future trend of democracy, so truly wrought out in play, demands it. The whole army of future citizens longs for it and therefore it becomes an opportunity and an obligation of the citizen today to provide it.

Probably the one place where the greatest call comes for proper physical growth and development of the play movement is in our high schools. With all the changes of educational advancement, with the ever present and vital changes of physical and moral standards, the high school boys and girls need every

care and attention that may possibly be given for the full, free and steady expression of the play instincts.

We are then confronted with the question: What is the minimum standard of equipment needed to insure the proper development? Most people think of the playground in terms of expensive equipment. It is possible to make the playground movement in any community a fairly costly one. But it is neither necessary nor desirable. What is chiefly needed is not expensive apparatus but a few people interested in the movement and willing to give some time and energy to directing and supervising play and games, plus a few pieces of useful and inexpensive play apparatus. There are a number of splendid, useful, and safe pieces of equipment that may be home-made. There is in every community enough material, not in use, that may be utilized in the making of this equipment. The teachers and students with the coöperation of patrons can make the equipment and have a playground that will be a credit to the school and the community and be of the highest value to the pupil.

In our cities and larger communities where the high school has quarters independent of the graded school the play area is developed entirely on the basis of high school students. When the high school and graded school are one, due attention should be given to the play development of the pupils in the grades, especially is this true in regard to games that require no equipment. As this paper is dealing with the high school, we shall only equip that part of the play area, but we must keep in mind the fact that the other students require space and must be considered.

1. To have one person as supervisor of play in the high school is essential. If this person can not give full time, he or she should give a large portion of time to the playground work. The movement should have some type of organization and some degree of control.

2. To have the teachers, all of them, interested and active is a great step forward and a step of inspiration. All can help and all may be benefitted thereby.

3. A play area for games. This area should be free from all equipment and far enough removed from the danger of balls and other elements of equipment. Here tag games, relay races, mental games and the like may be played by various groups.

4. Where the space will permit, have a baseball field.

Perhaps, neglect some other pieces of equipment for this great American game. It seems essential to the real growth of boyhood. Where the space will permit, have an indoor baseball court for the girls out of doors. Let them play with an indoor ball and bat.

5. A basketball court is an essential piece of equipment in season. It is a splendid game for high school students. Where the boys and girls have separate play areas provide a court of each group.

6. Volleyball is one of the finest games known. It is new to most high school groups but when once learned it proves most popular. If possible, provide two courts, one for the boys and one for the girls.

7. The area for the boys should have a number of horizontal bars scattered about. These pieces of equipment give much freedom to the individual for proper exercise.

8. Provide a number of swings for the girls. Be sure that they understand how to use them and use them properly. They have splendid possibilities for good.

9. A jumping track and pit is a fine piece of equipment both for boys and girls. Here running high and broad, standing high and broad jumping is performed. Great interest may be obtained in jumping. Keep records of all jumps and use them in advancement from month to month.

10. Have two or more quoits sets. A place given to quoits will be found to be a good investment. All students enjoy throwing horse-shoes and with a good quoit set much interest will be added.

11. The baseball field may be used for football in season.

12. Other pieces that may be added from time to time are: teeter boards, giant strides, slides, croquet sets and where a large area is available—tennis courts. Do not take up a limited space with tennis courts. Remember that while tennis is a most excellent game, only four may play at one time and in a high school numbers must be considered. Let the tennis courts be placed about in the community.

All the material that has been listed is not costly. The greatest expense is in the purchase of balls and nets. The entire equipment may be obtained at a minimum cost and through proper interest the money may be easily obtained.

Funds for the equipment may be obtained in numbers of ways. The school board should furnish the standard equipment just as they furnish desks, chairs, tables and the like. By plays, socials, box suppers and many other attractive ways funds may be raised to

supplement what the school board gives or to obtain added and better equipment or more equipment.

Use thought and care in placing equipment. Avoid placing ball-games in dangerous positions. Utilize the space to best advantage. Do not forget the position of the sun.

Place benches about for the use of players in rest periods. These benches may be home made and with a little paint may be made attractive and help the general appearance of the play area.

Endeavor to have every student playing. The games that permit large numbers to take part are best.

Attempt some kind of daily calisthenics. Do not make it too strenuous but rather have it light and graceful in movement. Give exercises especially designed to develop coördination of the group.

Do not attempt to organize competitive teams in baseball, basketball and other games of that type where there is no one to properly coach and train the teams. There is no good to be obtained should the attempt be poorly made.

From time to time have athletic tests, field days, recreation hours, and exhibition drills. They add interest, not only to the play movement but to the general school spirit.

Have a medicine chest as a part of the playground equipment. Let it contain such things as iodine, witch-hazel, bandages, absorbent cotton, and other medicine for first aid. Study first aid.

Develop a true sportsmanship spirit. Teach players how to accept victory and defeat. Stress fairness in play, physical development, moral tone and best of all—a highly developed personality in full harmony with fellow players.

WHAT STUDIES ARE PRACTICAL?

And there is where we stand today. The elimination of Greek from the college curriculum blurred the high light, the supreme distinction of scholarship. The elimination of Latin as an essential study leaves us without any educational standard save a correct knowledge of English, a partial knowledge of modern languages, and some acquaintance, never clearly defined, with precise academic studies. The scientist discards many of these studies as not being germane to his subject. The professional student deals with them as charily as possible. The future financier fears to embarrass his mind with things he does not need to know.—AGNES REPPLIER in *Atlantic Monthly* for April, 1922.